

You Won't Believe These Clickbait Tips: Lesson Plan

Lesson Description: This workshop for younger teens will provide an introduction to the concept of clickbait, how to spot clickbait, and how it affects the internet. Attendees will look at several examples of clickbait headlines and discuss their feelings and the purpose that the headline serves. They will also break up into smaller groups to create their own clickbait-style headlines based on popular books and return to the main group to share them with their classmates.

ACRL frameworks:

Authority is contextual and constructed
Information has value

Learning Outcomes:

Attendees will:

1. Understand what clickbait is
2. Understand how to spot clickbait, in order to avoid it
3. Create their own clickbait headlines to understand how clickbait is made while expressing themselves creatively

Key concepts:

1. Clickbait is internet content designed to get people to click on it
2. There are a number of possible negative outcomes from clicking on clickbait
3. It is possible to learn to recognize clickbait, which helps you resist it

Detailed Lesson Plan: 30-minute workshop

- (10-15 minute) [Lecture](#): What clickbait is, why it exists, and how to resist it
 - Ask the class: "What do you think? Have you heard of clickbait? What do you think it is?"
 - Look at some examples (ideally distinct types, each its own slide). For each example, read the headline, and then ask the class how they feel when they read it, how they think the author wants them to feel, and what they think the article's actual content is.
 - Define clickbait: anything on the internet that is designed to get you to click on it
 - How does it work? Explain the curiosity gap
 - Why is Clickbait used? Explain that it's intended to get your clicks, to drive advertising income
 - Why is clickbait a problem? Explain some of the issues with clickbait: it distracts from legitimate sources, can lead to computer viruses, can result in stolen identity or money, and it can spread misinformation

- Emphasize that these won't all happen every time – the aim is not to scare them!
 - How to resist clickbait? Explain how to resist it – stopping and thinking. The key thing is recognizing clickbait, which workshop attendees should now be able to do!
 - Be sure to note that everyone, even adults, “fall for” (click on) clickbait sometimes. Don't beat yourself up too much when it happens!
 - End lecture by introducing the breakout room activity – we will make our own clickbait
 - Explain that they will be creating headlines based on books. Give an easy/clear example, such as, if the book were *Green Eggs & Ham*, the headline could be, “You Won't Believe What Color Eggs This Guy Eats!”
- (10 minute) Break-out room activity:
 - Break into groups and lead participants in creating clickbait headlines to describe a popular book from a list of 5 options (workshop leaders should have them ready to paste into the chat box). You can edit the book lists as you see fit, but try to keep a balance of classic YA, recent best-sellers, & books assigned for school.
 - Each breakout room should choose a scribe to write the headlines.
 - If there's time, participants can create multiple headlines and/or draw a picture to go along with the chosen headline. Participants tend to get into the activity and come up with more than one.
- (5-10 minute) Group discussion:
 - Return to main room and lead the groups in presenting their headlines. Ask for a volunteer to go first or go in numerical order. Other groups guess the books the headlines are for. If they need help, you can give them a hint or list the 5 options that it could be.
- (1 minute) Conclusion:
 - Thank them for participating, and say something like, “now you should be equipped to encounter clickbait around the web. Good luck!”

Appendix: List of books

- *Harry Potter*
- *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*
- *Holes*
- *Divergent*
- *A Wrinkle in Time*
- *The Hunger Games*
- *The Fault in Our Stars*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*

- *Hatchet*
- *Percy Jackson & The Olympians*
- *Twilight*
- *Lord of the Flies*
- *The Mortal Instruments*
- *The Giver*
- *One of Us Is Lying*

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You Won't Believe These Clickbait Tips! Attendee Handout

What is Clickbait?

Clickbait is internet content created specifically to convince people to click on a link to a certain web page.

Why is clickbait a problem?

There are hundreds of thousands of things to click on and read on the internet, so clickbait wastes your time when you are looking for real information. Sometimes it can lead you to a site that can infect your computer with malware. It can also spread misinformation, especially when people share it on social media without checking if it's true.

Things to look out for:

Headlines that look like this:

- [_____] tries to [_____]. The reason why will make you [_____]
- [_____] tries to [_____]. You won't BELIEVE what happens next
- This video will prove that [_____]
- Eating too much of these ordinary foods could kill you!
- 10 [_____] you should never [_____] to [_____]
- X was Y. First you'll be shocked, then you'll be inspired
- 15 [_____] that [_____]. Number 12 is incredible!
- The thing [_____] doesn't want you to know

Weird photos or pictures that are zoomed in or out so far that you don't understand what is happening in them.

Anything that promises to be an easy way to make money, advertises a super good deal on something that's usually expensive, or claims that you have won a contest or prize that you don't remember signing up for.

The takeaway:

- Headlines that seem too good to be true (or too bad to be true) probably are.
- Always read what you are sharing on social media -- and not just the headline!
- Don't download something onto your computer if you don't know what it is, and don't give your personal information unless you're sure the site is legit.

Learn how to resist Clickbait:

Stop and think for a minute before and after:

Before you click: Think about what the headline is asking you to do and why.

After you click: Ok, you clicked. It happens! What did you see? How did you feel? Was it what you hoped, or was it disappointing?

Further Resources:

More tips on avoiding clickbait: The Skeptic's Toolbox: Identifying and Resisting Clickbait. (2019, May 10). *The Great Courses Daily*. <https://www.thegreatcoursesdaily.com/the-skeptics-toolbox-identifying-and-resisting-clickbait/>

More reasons to avoid clickbait: Political Disinformation. (2018, May 3). *MediaSmarts*. <https://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/digital-issues/authenticating-information/impact-misinformation-democratic-process/political-disinformation>

You Won't Believe These Clickbait Examples!

Some examples of clickbait to help you spot it on your own

1. A picture that's so unbelievable, confusing, or fake-looking that you want to click to find out what it is or if it's real.

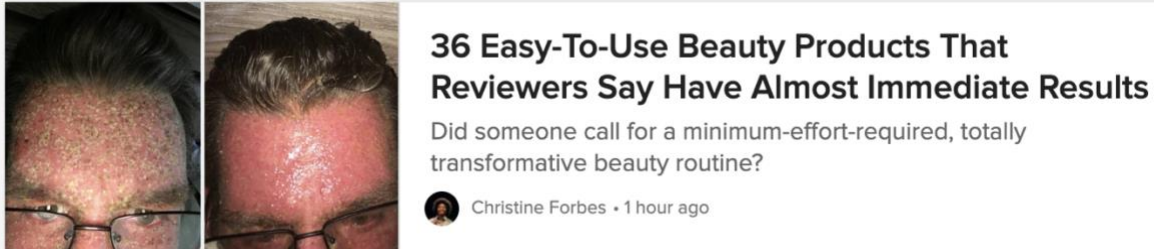


Image source: BuzzFeed

2. A challenge: something that insults you or says you *definitely* can't do something, which makes you want to click to prove them wrong.



**Frankly, I Bet You Don't Even Recognize
25% Of These Popular Lead Singers**

Image source: BuzzFeed

3. The "how to make money" claim. It suggests that you can have *free money* if you just click. Sometimes it even says that it's *definitely* not clickbait (but it is!)



Image source: Pinterest user @jaffrywardjr